



NOAA FY 2000 Budget Request Fact Sheet

YEAR OF THE OCEAN INITIATIVE



Coral Reef Protection

NOAA requests an increase of \$2 million in FY 2000 to protect fragile coral reef ecosystems by addressing the challenges defined in the President's Executive Order on Coral Protection. The funds will strengthen protection of the Nation's endangered coral reef resources by supporting a comprehensive program to map, monitor, assess and conserve U.S. coral reefs through partnerships with states, territories and communities with coral reef resources. Through this investment, NOAA will gain a better understanding of this fragile ecosystem, and help identify and implement solutions with other stakeholders that contribute towards the long-term protection and management of this valuable resource. NOAA's Coral Reef Protection request helps fulfill a key pledge made by the President at the National Ocean Conference in 1998. The request also complements and supports NOAA's Coral Reef Restoration request for a \$10 million increase under the Lands Legacy Initiative to restore fragile coral reefs damaged by human impacts such as ship groundings.



Coral Reef. Photo credit: OAR/National Undersea Research Program.

NOAA Budget	FY 2000 Change \$M
National Ocean Service (OR&F)	
Navigation Services (Ports for the 21st Century)	\$5.2
Ocean Resources Conservation & Assessment (Exploring the Last Frontier)	\$1.0
(Coral Reef Protection)	\$2.0
National Marine Fisheries Service (OR&F)	
Conservation and Management Operations (Magnuson-Stevens Act)	\$2.6
(Observers)	\$2.0
Information Collection and Analysis (Fisheries Oceanography)	\$1.6
(Aquaculture)	\$1.0
Oceanic & Atmospheric Research (OR&F)	
Climate and Air Quality Research (Ocean Climate Variability)	\$4.0
Oceans and Great Lakes (Aquaculture)	\$3.6
(Fisheries Oceanography)	\$0.4
(Ocean Observatories)	\$3.1
Procurement, Acquisition, & Construction Account	
(Fisheries Research Vessels)	\$51.6
NOAA Year of the Ocean Initiative -- Total	\$78.1

Why do Coral Reefs Need Protection?

Coral reefs are among the most exquisite and most endangered ecosystems on the planet. These fragile ecosystems provide a foundation for tourism, recreation and fishing industries that sustain billions of dollars in economic activity.

Frequently described as the marine equivalent of rainforests, coral reefs support a stunning diversity and abundance of undersea life. Coral reefs are home to over 25 percent of all marine life and support about 4,000 fish species in 0.3 percent of the sea area. In the U.S., fishermen currently reap an estimated \$75 million for their catch of federally managed coral reef-dependent species. Approximately 50% of all federally managed marine fisheries depend on coral reefs during part of their life cycle. In the U.S. and around the world, coral reefs are

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being seriously degraded by pollution, development, fishing and increased ocean temperatures. It's estimated that 10% of the earth's coral reefs have already been seriously degraded and a much greater percentage is threatened. Without aggressive conservation and protection measures, this decline is likely to lead to a loss of many valuable U.S. reef resources.



Sponges are as important as corals for reef structure.
Photo credit: OAR/National Undersea Research Program.

Responding to the Challenges

To conserve coral reef ecosystems for the use and enjoyment of future generations, President Clinton signed Executive Order 13089 on Coral Reef Protection in June of 1998. The order directs Federal agencies to expand research, preservation and restoration activities to preserve and protect the biodiversity, health, heritage and social and economic value of U.S. coral reef ecosystems and the marine environment. Working with state, territory and other federal agency partners, new funding in FY 2000 will allow NOAA to support protection measures identified in the executive order:

- Research, manage and restore coral reef ecosystems, including reducing impacts from pollution, sedimentation and fishing, and ensure that no action they authorize or fund will degrade coral reefs in U.S. waters.
- Coordinate a comprehensive program to map, monitor and assess the health of U.S. coral reefs; research the major causes and consequences of coral reef damage; and develop strategies to reduce damage and restore ailing reefs.
- Work with states, territories and member agencies to conserve and sustainably use coral reef resources, building on the success of the International Coral Reef Initiative.

Funding will support the efforts of the Coral Reef Task Force to research, monitor and manage the nation's irreplaceable coral reef resources and promote global stewardship. Activities

include: digital mapping of all U.S. coral reefs; monitoring and assessment; conducting research; reducing degradation; addressing pollution and sedimentation; studying salinity or temperature; reducing overuse; improving navigational aids; assessing impacts of international trade in coral reef species; conducting education and outreach activities; and promoting the efforts of the International Coral Reef Initiative and Global Coral Reef Monitoring network. The funding will build management capacity to mitigate human impacts and conserve coral reef ecosystems at local levels for the sustainable use and enjoyment of future generations. NOAA will work with our partners in affected states, territorial, commonwealth, tribal, and local governmental agencies, non-governmental organizations, scientific community, and commercial interests to increase national and local capacities for coral reef ecosystem management.

Why NOAA?

As a co-chair of the Coral Reef Task Force, NOAA has been intimately involved in implementing the provisions of the Executive Order on Coral Reef Protection. Among the Federal agencies, NOAA has the primary responsibility for the stewardship of marine resources, including monitoring the health of domestic coral reefs, restoring damaged or destroyed sections of reefs, and maintaining the health of coral reefs through management, research, and education. NOAA is committed to the protection and sustainable use of U.S. coral reef resources. The agency has invested millions of dollars to develop expertise and take action related to coral resources, including: protected area management; conservation and recovery of protected species; coastal zone management to prevent negative impacts; research and monitoring to study and understand reef ecosystems; and education.

"Pollution, overfishing and overuse have put many of our unique reefs at risk. Their disappearance would destroy the habitat of countless species. It would unravel the web of marine life that holds the potential for new chemicals, new medicines, unlocking new mysteries. It would have a devastating effect on the coastal communities . . . whose livelihood depends upon the reefs."

President Bill Clinton

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